

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A skate including a plurality of wheels disposed along a common longitudinal axis, the skate comprising:

a base defining an upper surface, a lower surface, and toe and heel ends;

a frame secured to the undersurface of the base for mounting the plurality of wheels;

a substantially non-rigid upper portion adapted to receive a skater's foot, the non-rigid upper portion being secured to the upper surface of the base;

a substantially rigid internal heel counter secured to the heel end of the base and projecting upwardly therefrom within and covered at least in part by the substantially non-rigid upper portion;

a substantially rigid ankle support cuff pivotally secured to an upper edge of the internal heel counter, the ankle support cuff being able to pivot relative to the heel counter independently of the non-rigid upper portion, the ankle support cuff being fastenable about the ankle of a skater; and

an ankle pad lining an interior of the ankle support cuff.

2. The skate of Claim 1, wherein the ankle support cuff is completely separate from the substantially non-rigid upper portion.

3. The skate of Claim 1, wherein the ankle pad extends downwardly below the ankle cuff and within the internal heel counter

4. The skate of Claim 3, wherein a lower edge of the ankle pad is free and separate from the internal heel counter.

5. The skate of Claim 1, further comprising at least a partial outer ankle shell covering an exterior of the ankle cuff.

6. The skate of Claim 5, wherein the outer ankle shell is substantially non-rigid.

7. The skate of Claim 6, wherein at least a portion of the substantially rigid ankle cuff is exposed between the partial ankle shell and the substantially non-rigid upper portion.

8. The skate of Claim 1, wherein the ankle cuff is pivotally connected on lateral and medial sides thereof to the internal heel counter.

9. The skate of Claim 1, wherein a gap is defined between a lower rear edge of the ankle cuff and an upper edge of the upper shoe portion.

10. The skate of Claim 1, wherein the base is substantially rigid.

11. The skate of Claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the substantially non-rigid upper portion is formed from a breathable material.

12. A skate including a plurality of ground-engaging wheels, comprising:  
a base defining an upper surface, an undersurface, and a toe and heel end;  
a frame secured to the undersurface of the base for mounting the plurality of wheels;

a substantially non-rigid upper portion adapted to receive a skater's foot and secured to the upper surface of the base, the substantially non-rigid upper portion extending upwardly from the base and terminating below the ankle of a skater;

a substantially rigid internal heel counter mounted within and covered at least partially by the substantially non-rigid upper portion; and

a pivotable ankle support assembly connected to the internal heel counter at only lateral and medial sides thereof, the ankle cuff assembly including a substantially rigid ankle cuff and internal ankle pad.

13. A skate including a plurality of ground-engaging rollers, comprising:  
a base defining an upper surface, an under surface, and a toe and heel end;  
a frame secured to the under surface of the base for mounting the plurality of rollers;

a substantially non-rigid upper portion adapted to receive a skater's foot and secured to the upper surface of the base, the substantially non-rigid upper portion extending upwardly from the base and terminating below the ankle of a skater;

a substantially rigid internal heel counter mounted within and at least partially covered by the substantially non-rigid upper portion; and

an ankle cuff pivotally connected to an upper edge of the internal heel counter, and pivotal forwardly relative to the internal heel counter free of any substantial resistance from the substantially non-rigid upper portion.

14. The skate of Claim 13, further including an ankle pad lining an interior surface of the ankle cuff and extending downwardly into and freely received within an interior of the heel counter.